

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 RSC-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 AID-05 PC-01

/042 W

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R 071215Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2204

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CE

SUBJ: RESULTS OF KANKESANTURAI BY-ELECTION

REF: COLOMBO A-24

1. S.J.V. CHELVANAYAKAM, FEDERAL PARTY (FP) AND  
TAMIL UNITED FRONT (TUF) LEADER, WON SWEEPING  
VICTORY IN KANKESANTURAI (KKS) BY-ELECTION FEB 6 BY  
MAJORITY OF 16,740 VOTES. HE POLLED 25,927 VOTES;  
V. PNNAMPALAM OF COMMUNIST PARTY MOSCOW-WING  
(CP/M), REPRESENTING UNITEF FRONT (UF) COALITION,  
SECURED 9,457 VOTES. INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE,  
S. AMBALAVANAR, POLLED 185 VOTES AND LOST HIS  
DEPOSIT. OUT OF 41,227 REGISTERED VOTERS  
(3,423 MORE THAN 1970 GENERAL ELECTION), 35,737  
CAST THEIR VOTES OR NEARLY 86 PERCENT AGAINST 80 PERCENT AT LAST  
GENERAL ELECTION. AT 1970 GENERAL ELECTION,  
CHELVANAYAKAM POLLED 13,520 VOTES AGAINST 8,164 VOTES  
FOR PONNAMPALAM, 57,788 FOR C. SUUNTHARALINGAM, AN  
INDEPENDENT, AND 3,051 BY T. TIRUNAVAKARASU OF  
TAMIL CONGRESS. CHELVANAYAKAM THUS RAISED  
PERCENTAGE OF VOTE HE RECEIVED IN 1975 OVER 1970

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FROM 44 PERCENT TO 72 PERCENT WHILE PONNAMPALAM'S

SUPPORT REMAINED STAGNANT AT 26 PERCENT OF VOTERS.

2. CHELVANAYAKAM'S VICTORY DEMONSTRATES HIS POPULARITY AS LEADER OF TUF, AND WILL PROVIDE IMPETUS TO TAMIL SEPARATIST MOVEMENT. HIS SUPPORT WAS SO STRONG THAT CP/M CANDIDATE, WITH STRONG BACKING BY LEADERS OF ALL CONSTITUENT PARTIES OF UF, FAILED TO SIPHON OFF ANY OF SUPPORT GIVEN IN 1970 TO OTHER CANDIDATES AND FEW NEW VOTERS. ALTHOUGH PONNAMPALAM MANAGED TO SECURE 1,293 MORE VOTES THAN AT LAST GENERAL ELECTION, THIS INCREASE MERELY REPRESENTS PROPORTIONATE INCREASE IN BLOCK VOTE OF SOCIALLY DEPRIVED LOW-CASTE TAMILS.

3. CAMPAIGN BY GOVT AGAINST TUF DEMAND FOR "SEPARATE STATE FOR TAMILS" ADVOCATED BY CHELVANAYAKAM AND MESSAGE ISSUED BY PRIME MINISTER TO VOTERS OF ELECTORATE DECLARING HER INTENT TO STEER GOVERNMENT POLICY TOWARD RACIAL SOLIDARITY FAILED TO INFLUENCE TAMIL MINORITY OF COUNTRY. ELECTION'S OUTCOME SEEMS TO CONFIRM THAT FEELING OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THEMSELVES IS STRONG AMONG TAMILS AND COMMUNAL ISSUES MAY DOMINATE TAMIL-SINHALESE RELATIONS IN DAYS AHEAD, ANOTHER HEADACHE FOR PRIME MINISTER, ALREADY OVERBURDENED BY ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.  
VAN HOLLEN

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